



Here is the Church, Where is the Steeple?...If you've driven by the Marlborough Congregational Church recently, you may have noticed that the building's steeple is encased in scaffolding. The 1842 building, part of the federal National Register of Historic Places, is undergoing a major restoration project which is being underwritten by funds raised by church members and a matching grant from the Connecticut Historic Restoration Fund. Structural repairs are being done to correct water leaks which have occurred for many years and have caused the main support beam to rot. Photo by Ken Hjulstrom.

Portland Budget Passes Handily

by Michael McCoy

Turnout may have been low, but the result of Monday's referendum was just what town officials were hoping for: a resounding 'yes.'

A \$28.81 million budget was passed by a 475-186 vote Monday. Just 10.8 percent of taxpayers showed up to vote.

The approved spending plan is a .074 percent decrease over the current year's budget. It features a mill rate of 27.24, a .25 mill increase. This translates to a .9 percent tax increase.

"I'm very happy that it passed," selectman John Anderson said. He added, "If you put a responsible budget forward, people will vote for it."

Still, Anderson said he was far from certain what the outcome would be. When asked what his expectations were going into the referendum, he admitted, "I had no idea." Indeed, when the budget cycle started at the beginning of the year, many officials seemed unsure of how smoothly the process would go, due to the economic climate.

Board of Education (BOE) Chairman Chris Phelps said, "Now that we have a budget, we look forward and actually implement it."

During the budget process, the BOE suffered \$538,999 worth of cuts to its proposed \$17.70 million 2009-10 spending plan; school board members refrained from deciding where that money would come from until after voters passed the budget.

"It's going to be a very difficult budget to implement," Phelps admitted, vowing to eliminate things that will have "the least impact on the kids' education."

The only real stir that came during this year's budget cycle was the backlash following Bransfield's cutting of \$155,650 from the library

budget. This was expected to cut the library's operating hours from 52 to 40 and result in the laying off of four library employees. The selectmen eventually restored \$78,350 of that, which prevented the aforementioned consequences.

"I was very pleased that the voters overwhelmingly agreed with the selectmen's budget," First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said. She said she had a feeling the budget would pass, but not by the large margin that it did. "People came out to specifically vote 'yes,'" she deduced. "I think the general consensus is there was not a lot of dissension."

Even with Monday's referendum, there is still one budget-related hurdle town officials must overcome. The spending plan assumes that all town employees will forego their raises for the coming year. However, only the police union has officially agreed to this. When the selectmen passed their budget last month, Bransfield said layoffs would be unavoidable if agreements could not be reached.

As of Wednesday, Bransfield said she had drafted proposals for the clerical supervisors and library unions, and that those groups still had to vote whether they are acceptable. She added that she has a meeting scheduled with the public works union next week to draw up an agreement. Bransfield said she had told the unions to hold out on voting until the town passed a budget.

The BOE will begin formally discussing cuts at its next meeting, which is scheduled for this Tuesday, May 19, at 7 p.m. in the library at Portland High School, 95 High St. Phelps said he figured the board would either finalize the cuts during that meeting or at the June 2 meeting.

Builder Designing Energy-Efficient Hebron Home

by Sarah McCoy

Hebron resident and builder Brad Wheatley is changing the way he does business. After 11 years of specializing in residential construction and renovation with his company BW Builders LLC, he is abandoning some standards of the trade for more earth-friendly approaches.

Wheatley is one of 21 applicants for the Connecticut Zero Energy Challenge, a home design and build competition for energy-efficient homes and construction techniques. The statewide competition is sponsored by the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund and the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund.

"For me, I got involved because I want to raise awareness for people to our unnecessary reliance on foreign oil and to spread the word about technologies and methods that can be used to reduce our energy consumption," Wheatley explained.

He submitted plans last month for a 2,444-square-foot single-family house to be located at 27 Mai Rd. Wheatley owns the property,

which currently sits unused in a residential area.

One of the main criteria in judging the Zero Energy Challenge will be the Home Energy Rating System (HERS) index. A house built to code will have a HERS rating of 100. In order to qualify as an Energy Star home the building must use 15 percent less energy, or have a HERS rating of 85. The planned house on Mai Road is expected to have a HERS rating of 19, meaning it will consume 80 percent less energy than a standard code-compliant home.

According to Michael Cohen, the HERS rater for the project, that will translate into real dollars for the home's future owner. "The Hebron house is projected to use a total of \$1,214 per year, a little over \$100 a month, for all purposes including heating, cooling, hot water, appliances, and lighting," he said. "This is a savings of over \$5,000 per year compared to the standard code-compliant home."

To achieve the HERS rating, Wheatley is planning to imply a number of specific meth-

ods to reduce energy use. The house will use solar power for electricity and hot water, a soy-based foam for insulation, triple-pane windows and geo-thermal heating and cooling. There was also careful consideration to window placement to allow for additional light and heat where appropriate. Wheatley explained that these technologies have been around for awhile but are just now increasing in popularity as individuals have become more aware of their impact on the earth.

In the coming weeks the judges for the Zero Energy Challenge will announce the 10 finalists for the competition. Wheatley is confident in his house's chances as the 19 HERS rating shatters the requirement set forth by the Zero Energy Challenge guidelines (50).

Right now Wheatley has turned his focus to selling the home on spec and moving forward with the building process. On June 6, BW Builders will host an Energy Expo at the site of the future home. On-hand will be experts in

geothermal heating and cooling, solar energy, HERS raters, and others. The expo will run from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. and registration is required.

Attendance is capped at 400, though Wheatley said more expo dates are expected in the future. To register, call 203-668-3264 after 7 p.m.

One of the keys to making the house as energy efficient as possible, according to Wheatley, was the cooperation between all the players involved. "We brought together the solar players, the geothermal players, the building envelope players, and architects," Wheatley said. "The house was designed by experts for this particular lot. It's not like it's a house that can be built and placed anywhere."

All the technology and efficiency advances are well and good but Wheatley wants to sell the house too. "It's a synergistic relationship between the newer technology and the rural character that fits with Hebron," he said.

See Home on Page 2



Hebron resident Brad Wheatley is designing a new energy-efficient home on Mai Road in Hebron. Pictured is an artist's rendering of the final product.

Home continued from Front Page

As soon as Wheatley has a buyer for the home he can move ahead with the building permits and necessary preparations. He hopes to break ground later this year and estimates a 7-month construction schedule.

Once the house is complete it will be tested for its actual HERS rating (the 19 is an estimated number if the construction is executed as planned).

The Zero Energy Challenge is expected to announce the winners of the competition in December 2010, once all the finalists have completed their building. The grand prize is \$15,000, second prize is \$10,000, and third prize is \$5,000. Winners will also receive promotional exposure for future high efficiency

homes.

Wheatley, who has built two Energy Star-rated homes in the past, is already eyeing locations for future green homes. "I won't go back to traditional building techniques," he said. "It doesn't make sense."

The house at 27 Mai Rd. will be priced at three levels based on customized options available to the owner. The options will not affect the overall efficiency of the home. Final prices haven't been set, though Wheatley estimates that they'll be finalized later this month.

More information about the home or the upcoming expo can be found at www.bwbuilds.com.

East Hampton Police News

4/26 — Troy P. Kauffman, 43, of 14 Main St., was issued a ticket for speeding, East Hampton Police said.

4/27 — Michael Cataldo, 30, of 163 Shunpike Rd., Cromwell, and Michael D. Goldner, 43, of 22 Hayes Rd., were issued tickets for traveling too fast, police said.

4/28 — Henry Moorehouse, 43, of 64 Main St., was arrested pursuant to a court-ordered warrant for failure to respond to an infraction, police said.

4/29 — Jeremy C. Broad, 28, of 36 Ridgeview Rd., was arrested for possession of narcotics and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

4/30 Dylan J. Moore, 19, of 210 East Hampton Rd., Marlborough, was arrested pursuant to a warrant for third-degree burglary, third-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit third-

degree larceny, police said.

4/30 — Jerome Belair, 45, of 43 Childs Rd., Harry Henderson, 55, of 634 Hopeville Rd., Griswold, and Lori Swanton, 49, of 40 Colchester Ave., were involved in a three-vehicle accident at the intersection of Colchester Avenue and Dale Drive, police said, adding that Belair was issued a ticket for failure to keep a reasonable distance apart.

5/4 — Thomas J. Herlihy, 78, of 85 North Main St., was arrested for criminal trespass, police said.

5/5 — Daniel Cook, of 16 East High St., was issued a ticket for allowing a dog to roam, police said.

5/6 — William G. Boyce, 40, of 12 West Point Rd., was issued a ticket for talking on a cell phone without using a hands-free device and failure to stop at a stop sign, police said.

Hebron to Receive Thousands As Result of Tax Dispute

by Sarah McCoy

A recent court ruling has Hebron town officials expecting thousands of dollars in back taxes and interest.

Rockville Superior Court Judge Robert Vacchelli ruled last week that REJA Inc., owned by John Wittzsteller, is responsible for paying the town \$31,087 in back taxes and interest and another \$2,462 in attorney fees for the property at 612 Church St.

Once this debt is settled, Board of Selectmen Chair Jeff Watt reported, the town will stop the foreclosure proceedings that began nearly a year ago.

The issue at hand goes back to the early 1990s, when REJA Inc. and then-Town Manager Robert Lee made an agreement regarding the necessary cleanup of the Church Street property in exchange for a break on the tax penalty payments that had accrued. According to court documents, REJA Inc. stopped paying taxes to the town in 2000 though they still continued the cleanup process.

(The property at 612 Church St. has been vacant for nearly 20 years, former Town Manager Jared Clark reported last year. Prior to that it had been used for a variety of endeavors, including a distillery and a research plant for industrial processing materials.)

Last year, REJA Inc. received word from the Department of Environmental Protection that the site was free of contamination. At that point the company looked to partner with the Connecticut Water Company to provide a well for

improved water access to the Amston Lake community.

At that point, Clark began foreclosure proceedings on the property, because of the over \$80,000 due in taxes on the property. According to Watt, REJA has paid off over \$50,000 of that debt since the proceedings began.

However, Wittzsteller argued that the amount remaining should be \$13,500 and not \$31,087, due to the agreement with Lee. In his decision Vacchelli wrote that Wittzsteller lost the right to the reduced amount when he failed to meet the May 1, 1998, cleanup deadline agreed to with Lee.

Vacchelli did note that time estimates for DEP approval on cleanup operations, such as the one at 612 Church St., would be around 40 years, not three like REJA had initially estimated.

Wittzsteller still has time to file an appeal on the decision.

Earlier this week, Watt said he's under the impression that the defendant won't appeal and went on to say that he hopes the matter will be put to rest for good.

"For me, the best thing would be for the town to recoup the taxes and REJA can move forward with their relationship with the Connecticut Water Company to provide water to the Amston Lake community," he said. "Our first choice, for the town, is not to own the land. That's only a last-ditch effort if we can't collect the taxes."

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I remember when I was in sixth grade, not long after I had started becoming a die-hard Mets fan, my teacher had us write a paper in which we explained a famous person we'd like to meet, why we want to meet him, what we'd do, etc. I chose Darryl Strawberry, who was then the Mets' star right fielder.

Of course, hindsight is 20-20, and Strawberry's life story — he had incredible talent but squandered it due to a cocaine addiction that resulted in several suspensions from the game and stints in rehab; plus, he was alleged to have beaten his wife — isn't exactly the stuff role models for sixth-graders are made of. But when you're 11 years old you don't know any of that. All I knew was Strawberry seemed like a pretty cool dude, was a great player and I very much would've liked to meet him. I still remember the grade I got on that paper (a B-, which appalled me; I had high standards, and indeed was a straight A student that year).

Like I said, in the ensuing years I would come to realize Strawberry wasn't quite the awesome guy my junior self thought he was. But, despite all his personal issues (or perhaps because of them; once you come to realize all the coulda, woulda, shoulda been baseball moments — the home runs, the various feats of glory — that slipped through his fingers, due largely to a drug problem he never seemed able to shake, you just start to feel bad for the guy), I always carried a soft spot for Strawberry, even after he signed with — *gasp* — the Yankees. So when I came across a brief interview with Strawberry in a recent *Newsweek*, I just had to read it.

The interview was basically to promote Strawberry's new memoir, but the interviewer still asked some good questions, and some timely ones. He asked Straw at one point how he feels about steroids, and Strawberry gave a somewhat surprising answer. He said that if steroids were around when he was a player, "of course" he would have taken them. That quote disappointed me a little, as I hate what steroids have done to the game, and to the records, but at least Strawberry was being honest.

The most interesting answer given in the brief *Newsweek* piece came when the interviewer asked Strawberry, "Looking back, what would you differently?" You'd think the answer would be something along the lines

of "a lot," after all the problems he went through during his career with drug abuse and other personal demons (also, he admitted during the interview that he often wonders how good he could have been). But his answer surprised me: "Nothing. That's the way my journey was supposed to happen. That's the lesson of my life. I went through hell, I was great at something, but I couldn't stop hurting myself. But I survived, and now I have peace."

And I hope he does have peace. While he's not quite the hero he was when I was 11, I still wish him nothing but the best.

* * *

Speaking of baseball, I was watching the Mets game on TV Sunday afternoon (Sundays are the one day a week I'm allowed to see the Mets on TV, as those games are typically on WPIX in New York and simulcast up here by either Channel 20 or Channel 61; the rest of the week, the games are on SNY, that cable channel that some parts of the state do get, just no place around here), and one of the commentators relayed a story about former Met "Marvelous Marv" Throneberry, one of the star players of the early days of the Mets (when the team really stunk, regularly losing upwards of 100 games each season). It was a story I'd heard before, but it still makes me laugh.

One day, Throneberry hit a triple. It was very exciting. But the opposing team appealed to the umpires that Throneberry never touched second when running the bases, so he should be out. The umpires agreed, and called Marv out. This sent Mets manager Casey Stengel running out of the dugout to argue on Throneberry's behalf. "Don't bother, Casey," one of the umpires told the skipper. "He missed first base, too."

* * *

And continuing with the baseball theme, here's something I haven't busted out in a while: A Yogi Berra-ism, which is sure to help you end the week with a smile (and perhaps a puzzled scratch of the head). After Johnny Bench broke Yogi's record for home runs by a catcher, Yogi sent him a telegram saying, "Congratulations. I always knew that record would stand until it was broken."

* * *

See you next week.

Portland Veterans Hoping to Add New Names to Memorial

by Michael McCoy

Given an excess of new names, the Portland Veteran Affairs Committee is looking for donors to update their memorial by Memorial Day.

Between veterans of World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War and the wars in the Persian Gulf — from Desert Storm to the present — there are 23 names that are yet to be added to the Portland Veterans Memorial. (The names are not necessarily those of recently deceased; anyone who was a Portland resident at the time they enlisted in the military, and were in active duty during wartime, can be included in the memorial.) This carries a price tag of \$2,000. However, the town has no money left in the veterans' activities line item, so First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said the additions would have to wait the new fiscal year.

Bransfield noted the current town freeze on discretionary spending, adding that even if the current spending plan is adhered to, "The revenues are not coming in." She also added that conveyance tax, building permits, and tax collection are all falling short of expectations.

"I'm not lifting the discretionary freeze until we know where we're at," she said. (The freeze's only exceptions are public safety matter and other emergencies.)

Bransfield said the town has spent \$4,791 on name additions to the memorial since last June. Of this, \$3,291 came this past January, which exceeded the current's year's line item by \$291.

"I hate to have to say 'no'" to authorizing more town money for the memorial, Bransfield said. On the bright side, she said that money would be available without question when the 2009-10 financial year starts on July 1. The newly-approved budget contains a line item of \$3,500, which will sufficiently account for the names.

However, Reg Farrington, who led the memorial fundraising effort that started in March 2006 and culminated in the unveiling of the stately \$58,000 monument on Memorial Day 2007, wants to see those names added in time for Portland's Memorial Day parade on May 24.

Farrington said he understood that the town did not have the money, and did not point any fingers. Still, one way or another, he said will get those names added by Memorial Day. According to Farrington, he has a donor lined up for \$1,000, but is still counting on residents and businesses to fund the other half. Donations may be made to the Portland Veterans Memorial at P.O. Box 71 Portland, CT 06480.

Bransfield said she was optimistic Farrington and the Veterans Affairs Committee would raise enough money for the additional names.

The Portland Veterans Memorial is accessible to the public and located directly behind the Town Hall. It includes veterans from World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Grenada and Lebanon, Panama and Persian Gulf conflicts.

Marlborough Finance Board Tries to Address Budget Failure

by Adam Benson

The months of heated talks and last-minute compromises that defined the 2009-10 budget planning cycle in Marlborough will continue for at least another three weeks.

Following the largest turnout the town has seen in nearly 40 years, voters on Monday narrowly defeated a \$20.96 million spending plan for next year, mostly over concerns about education cuts and a proposed 3.56 percent tax increase. The final tally was 188 'no' votes to 171 'yes' votes.

"The failure of the budget in my mind, and from the way I read the output of the residents, is there's definitely a surge to get some additional funding into the educational system," First Selectman Bill Black said. "That was the tipping point."

Due to scheduling conflicts with two larger rooms, Monday's town meeting was held in the Marlborough Elementary School cafeteria – which has a maximum capacity of 588. Black said he was prepared to adjourn the meeting to another day if the turnout exceeded safety standards. More than 420 people were in attendance.

"I have never, ever seen a turnout of this magnitude, but I was pleased to see people involved in the process and the way they conducted themselves at the meeting was a credit to all of them," Black said.

In a rare move, Black ruled all voting be done via paper ballots – a decision he made in response to some who voiced concern over intimidation or harassment based on their vote.

"The paper ballot question had been raised by the Board of Finance many, many weeks ago," Black said. "They wanted people to be able to freely vote their conscience without fear of reprisal. That kind of set me back a little bit. In all the years I've been here, I've never seen the need for a paper ballot, but I wanted to defer to them."

The town's charter requires another budget vote be held by June 1, so members of the Board of Finance (BOF) huddled Wednesday to try to come up with a spending plan that voters would find acceptable.

The 90-minute long meeting Wednesday also gave residents a chance to weigh in on the direction the budget should go, and few were shy about speaking their mind.

Amy Traverse said she voted for the budget Monday along with her husband.

"We feel like there's been such a split in the community, and it just continues to get nastier and more divisive," she said.

But, she warned, she was ready to switch her vote should the new budget reflect a higher tax increase.

"People are still losing their jobs. The foreclosures in this town you don't hear about are staggering. Enough is enough," she said.

Resident John Stimpson agreed. Over the past five years, Stimpson said, he's seen his taxes rise by 40 percent – and they've jumped by 100 percent since 1998.

"People have had enough of tax increases," he said. "You just can't keep doing that to people. The people who want to retire or who just got out of school are not going to be able to live here."

And in unusually direct public terms, Black wrote a letter to finance board members asking them to find a middle ground that will enable a budget to be adopted. Selectman Joseph La Bella said he fully endorsed Black's missive.

"Up until now, I have not spoken out publicly nor shared my thoughts on what should happen with the budget since it left the Board of Selectmen," Black wrote. "...This process, however, has become overly divisive, and we are now, I believe, beginning to see the first signs of fraying in the tight knit fabric of our community."

A major challenge facing taxpayers is the town's significant debt. Finance board chairwoman Catherine Gaudinski said that of the 3.56 percent tax increase, only about a half of one percent was not related to ongoing payments for capital projects.

Still, the board did come up with a plan they are hopeful will satisfy both sides. On a 4-2 vote, the body opted to drop its undesignated

fund balance from 7.5 percent to 7.4 percent – freeing up an additional \$20,000 for the local school district. (While the BOF thought this would also lead to a slight drop in the proposed tax increase, Gaudinski said Thursday the debt service was miscalculated when the numbers were put together for Wednesday's meeting. So the budget's proposed tax increase will remain 3.56 percent.)

"If the education compromise were offered, I think we all go home," BOF member Beth Petroni said. "Monday night's vote said to us that more than half the people were OK with the tax increase. That's why I think this is a reasonable step at this point and if it doesn't go, then let's start the long exercise."

Not everybody was on board with the idea. "I don't agree with the approach. I think we're doing some voodoo economics," BOF member Pasquale Amodeo said. "We're avoiding making a tough decision by artificially spending money."

Gaudinski also voted against the measure, citing her fear about dipping into the town's reserves in such a lean economic time.

"I'm concerned about using our undesignated fund balance, because we're going to need every dollar of that" in future years, she said.

Board of Education Chairwoman Maria Grove said Thursday that, while not at the level she would have liked, the restored funding should be enough to get the budget through the town's pro-education faction.

"I think that this is something that the supporters of the school budget are happy with," she said. "We're willing to concede a little bit and we can be very creative and hopefully we won't have to cut any more services. I'm very happy that we have a number, and I feel confident the public will respond positively to this."

The BOE will hold a special meeting starting at 6 p.m. Monday, May 18, in the media center at the elementary school, where it will craft a new spending plan.

Grove said the school board has made no

decisions yet about which organizations or programs within the district will be supported with the extra dollars.

"It'll all be on the table and hopefully, we'll be able to find a way to keep it all off the table," she said.

Grove also credited Black with stepping in. "Other than Cathy Gaudinski, there's really been no one singular person directing this process and this year, we really needed it," she said.

Initially, the BOF charged the school district with slicing \$335,000 from its bottom line. The school board said it could afford to trim roughly \$208,000 before impacting services, though the BOF settled on a \$256,445 cut leading into Monday's vote.

At a BOF meeting earlier this month, which followed a public hearing on the budget, member Dan McMahon pitched a compromise that would put local school district cuts at approximately \$225,000 – presumably giving educators enough money to preserve the town's summer reading program and its contribution to AHM Youth Services.

McMahon said Wednesday he stood behind the BOF's newest compromise.

"I would support this on the basis that it moves closer in the direction of reconciling," he said. "I'm just afraid it might not be enough."

However, some of his colleagues said the revised budget would be a litmus test of sorts to determine where exactly residents' feelings lie.

"If this doesn't pass, we've got to look at both sides," said Cliff Denniss, a BOF alternate. "If it fails, we know it's because of the overall budget. It's not the Board of Education."

Black said before Wednesday's meeting that he was confident a spending plan could be adopted that only involved minor adjustments.

"My hope is that the Board of Finance responds to the expectations that people have placed on it for a budget that meets the needs of residents and those on fixed incomes," he said. "I don't see a budget going forward that has to be adjusted substantially to be passed."

East Hampton BOF, Town Council Debate Budget Cuts

by Michael McCoy

East Hampton taxpayers will take another shot at approving a budget next month, but this incarnation will be a bit lighter.

During its meeting Tuesday night, the Town Council voted to send another 2009-10 budget proposal to referendum, with a \$150,000 education and a \$50,000 general government cut.

Last week, voters rejected a \$37.43 million budget by a vote of 775-671. So, town officials went back to the drawing during a couple back-to-back meetings Tuesday night.

The evening began with a swift Board of Finance (BOF) meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Annex. During the public comment section, Board of Education (BOE) Chairman Michael Vasquez attempted to task the BOF to reconsider using some of the town's \$4.6 million fund balance to apply to the budget.

Resident Patience Anderson said that if cuts needed to be made, "the Board of Education can share the pain." She also said the referendum needs to be publicized more aggressively the next time around.

BOF Chairman Ted Hintz led off the internal discussion, first speaking about fund balance, which he said had been discussed at length. "We do have a nice, healthy fund balance," he admitted. However, he credited this as one of the reasons the town's bond rating was recently bumped from A+ to AA, and affirmed his earlier position not to use fund balance within the budget. "No one wants to make anymore cuts," he said, but considering the unpredictability of the current economy, he continued, "I think it's a little premature to start using the savings account."

Hintz endorsed cutting \$200,000 from the BOE budget.

BOF member Kurt Comisky introduced a sentiment that was echoed throughout the evening, saying, "There's a couple Town Council members who didn't support [the budget] openly." He added that, in the aftermath of the budget rejection, the community should expect layoffs, figuring, "There should be no surprise."

Speaking about tri-board meetings (which

include the Town Council, BOE and BOF), BOF member Barbara Moore said, "We did all agree this was a great budget," but agreed with Comisky that the council did not effectively support it. She even criticized members of the BOF for not writing letters to the editor in support.

Moore said she felt \$100,000 would be a more appropriate cut to the budget than \$200,000, and wanted to see it split between both BOE and general government.

Of those in attendance, George Pfaffenbach agreed, and said, "It really bothers me that everyone's automatically agreed that \$200,000 is the number." He also said he took issue with any Town Council member saying, "I'm gonna pass [the budget] through the town council, but I'm not going to vote for it." (Town Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel explicitly said just this when the council sent the budget to referendum last month.)

Comisky said statements like that are "political."

Pfaffenbach was also the only BOF member who even hypothetically suggested the application of some of the fund balance. However, Hintz and BOF member Judy Isele immediately, and almost simultaneously, retorted, "We send the wrong message."

BOF member Sharon Kjellquist seemed to agree with Anderson's public comment regarding publicizing the referendum, saying, "I think we became somewhat complacent" as a result of the budget passing the first time around the last two years.

The BOF voted 4-2 to send a \$37.23 million budget to the Town Council. Moore and Pfaffenbach dissented.

The regular Town Council meeting began at 6:30 p.m. When discussing the BOF's motion, council member Tom Cordeiro did not mince words and asserted, "I can't support a budget that cuts another \$200,000 from education," and figured the budget's failing by 104 votes was not a mandate to cut such a sum.

Council member John Tuttle said he agreed and addressed the rest of the council: "If you don't like the budget, vote 'no.' Don't do like you did last time."

"I agree 200 [thousand dollars] is too much," council member Christopher Goff said. In fact, he was perhaps the councilman most strongly in favor of sending the budget right back to the BOF. (Though the Town Council can cut more from the BOF budget and can reappropriate the location of the cuts, it cannot return money to the budget.)

Council member Sue Weintraub supported the \$200,000, and said she was willing to make further cuts, such as eliminating the town's economic development consultant, Connected to Connecticut. She later said, "I will not send it back to have less taken out; I will only send it back to have more taken out."

Cordeiro was the first council member to bring up fund balance, and said it had become a "dirty word." Though he did not outright call for it to be used, he said it was a reasonable notion, and said, "That's the people's money."

Hintz, who was in attendance at the meeting, later told the council, "The Board of Finance has been very clear that we're not interested in using fund balance." But council member Scott Minnick reminded him BOF members were merely following the council's budget policy statement, and using fund balance is ultimately the council's call. Cordeiro seemed to concur with Minnick, responding to Hintz, the agreement regarding the fund balance is "not set in stone."

Minnick said he was willing to go with the \$200,000 cut, but wanted to see it split between the BOE and general government.

Engel approved of the \$200,000 cut, but said, "I think it should all come from the Board of Education this time around." Ultimately, though, she said that "in the spirit of compromise," she agreed to cutting \$150,000 from education and \$50,000 from general government.

Council member Bill Devine put that sentiment into a motion, and the council approved it 4-3, with Tuttle, Goff and Cordeiro dissenting.

The new proposed 2009-10 budget comes to \$37.23 million, which is a .78 percent increase over the current year. The budget calls for the mill rate rising .2 mills to 24.01, which would translate to a .84 percent tax hike.

BOE member Don Coolican said Thursday he "was surprised [the way the \$200,000 cut was split between the BOE and general government] broke down the way it did," explaining that the BOE was prepared to suffer another \$200,000 blow.

Altogether, around \$370,000 has been cut from the BOE's proposed 2009-10 budget since school board members adopted it in January. The school board has also been hit with another \$81,000 in unexpected expenditures, including such items as increased worker's compensation and increased magnet school tuitions.

"That's a lot of money, and you have to look everywhere for it," Coolican said, figuring "everything's on the table." During the Town Council meeting, Vasquez said layoffs, program eliminations and an athletic transition to pay-to-play were all possible.

Despite the BOE cut being less than expected Tuesday night, Coolican said the process of making budget reductions is going to "be very painful."

Coolican also said that, with the exception of BOF member Sharon Kjellquist and, to a lesser extent, council member John Tuttle, neither the Town Council nor the BOF really has "a feel for how the Board of Education runs its business." Once a budget is approved, Coolican said the BOE appropriates the cuts "anyway we want."

The BOE will not formally make any cuts until a budget is approved.

The next budget referendum for June 2, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., in the auditorium at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

East Hampton Theater Troupe Celebrating 50 Years

by Michael McCoy

In 50 years, the Podium Players have gone from barbershop quartet to something of a household name in East Hampton. This weekend, the group's latest play will end its four-show run.

The Diviners, will be performed Saturday, May 16, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, May 17, at 4 p.m. Both shows will be at East Hampton Middle School, 19 Childs Rd.

Though the details of the Podium Players' birth are fuzzy, the story goes that they began in 1959 as a barbershop quartet in Hebron, where they met in a church, according to Val Bozzi, who has been a part of the group since 1986. Before long, the Players evolved into a theater troupe, performing a musical every year. In 1988, the group moved to East Hampton

"It's a community theater," Bozzi said. Bozzi is directing *The Diviners*, resuming a role she has filled many times.

"It has a strong place in my heart," Bozzi of the group. "Everyone has something, and this is my something."

After the move to East Hampton, Bozzi said, "We did a slew of Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals." In 1991, the nonprofit organization started its summer youth camp, which continues to this day. In addition, the Podium Players are also a fixture in the annual Old Home Day.

One charming aspect to the troupe is that they are nomadic. Instead of having a single space to call home, they have performed and rehearsed all over town, at places like, the middle, high, and Center Schools, St. Patrick's Church and the Goff House.

"We've used every single possible space we could use in town," Bozzi said. However, in the future, Bozzi said the group is hoping for something of a return to Hebron, as far as some performances go. According to Bozzi, the Players are hoping to secure some time in the RHAM High School auditorium, which she called a "state-of-the-art facility."

During their 50-year history, the Players have performed shows like *Brigadoon*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Oklahoma*, *Noises Off*, *The Sound of Music* and *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Recent productions have included stagings of somewhat lesser known plays like *Love, Sex and the IRS*, *Night Watch* and *Murder in the House of*

Horrors. Most recently, the theater troupe performed *Willy Wonka Jr.* last October.

"We work really hard and get it done," Bozzi said of the relatively short production cycles. Bozzi also figured the Players were "one of the longest-running community theatre groups in the state."

While its performance works run the gamut, the Podium Players tend to do a musical in fall and a play in the spring. By and large, the musicals tend to appeal to the whole family, while the plays are a little less child-friendly. However, even the non-musical plays tend to be genre-heavy (i.e. farces or mysteries).

The Diviners is decidedly different, and tells the story of Buddy Layman (played by Josh Van Heest,) who is left brain-damaged in the wake of a tragic near-drowning experience. As a result, the sight of water in any context horrifies Layman; however, the experience also gives him a certain power over the substance that affects his entire family.

The play, which begins when Layman is 14 and takes place during the Depression, also chiefly deals with the interaction between he and C.C. Showers, a transient preacher who has abandoned his faith. Bozzi said the result is a mix of tragedy and comedy.

"Everybody is a little rough around the edges," Bozzi said about the characters. As a result of some of the play's "mature" language, she said it might not be for the youngest of audiences, but figured it would appeal to most.

While *Willy Wonka Jr.* was a colorful, fantastical production with dozens of performers, Bozzi said this play was "bare bones and minimalistic and has a lot of substance." She added that the set design is sparse. For instance a couple barrels and bottles represent a general store. The production includes a cast of 12 and crew of three, including stage manager Jodi Brazal, who is also currently the troupe's president.

Though Bozzi said Podium is planning some upcoming fundraising efforts, they have historically relied on previous performance revenue for funding. This puts them in decent shape, as *Wonka* was immensely popular. Speaking of the broader shows, Bozzi said, "We like to do them, but we also have to do them" as they typically draw large crowds.



Eleven of the dozen *Diviners* cast members strike a pose during rehearsals for the Podium Players drama, which will be presented at East Hampton Middle School this weekend.

Conversely, she said of the current production, "This is an artistic endeavor," and likened the experience to "an off-Broadway play."

Auditions for *The Diviners* were held Feb. 25 and 26 and, like their other productions, all were welcome to try out. Actors were then left to study their lines themselves and rehearsals began in late March. Early rehearsals, which were primarily script readings, began at the public library's community room. As performance time drew near, rehearsals moved to their performance site at the middle school.

Though, the Podium Players are still in the process of acquiring the performance right, they will trade subtle for lavish when they return this fall with their next musical, *Annie*. Bozzi said the performance would be in either November

or December, with auditions being in August or September. More information will be available at their website, www.podiumplayers.org, as well as in the *Rivereast*, when things are firmed up.

In the even more immediate future, the summer youth camp is coming up this July. Registration forms are available at the Parks and Recreation office, located in the Town Hall Annex.

The Diviners debuted last weekend, and, according to Bozzi, word of mouth has been positive. The final two performances will be this Saturday, May 16, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, May 17 at 4 p.m. at the East Hampton Middle School. Tickets are available at the door for \$10 and at www.podiumplayers.org for \$9.

Residents Endorse Portland Town Place

by Sarah and Michael McCoy

Nearly 100 residents gathered at Brownstone Intermediate School last Thursday and voiced their support for Portland Town Place, the mixed-use development proposed for the former Elmcrest property, located at the southeast corner of routes 66 and 17A.

The proposal calls for 149,127 square feet of commercial space and 82 residential units located on the 14.89 acres. Plans for the development were submitted to the town by Portland Town Center LLC in February.

At last Thursday's public hearing, John Matthews, architect for the project, explained the 10 proposed buildings. The buildings include a row of townhouses, a six-story apartment building with commercial space at the bottom, a bank, a Walgreens pharmacy, a restaurant and a 6,500 square foot grocery store book-ended by two additional commercial spaces. The plans also feature an existing residential home, which will remain, as the current occupant has lifetime ownership.

The proposed development will have just one entrance, off of Marlborough Street.

Undoubtedly the part of the plans that brought the most concerns from residents was the demolition of two historical properties currently standing on the land in question. The plans call for one historic home being renovated and converted into office space with two residential units upstairs, but many residents expressed a desire to see all three included in the plans.

Matthews explained to the crowd that the intention of the builders is to recycle as many of the "elements" of the house as possible but that the actual structures themselves are not

included in the current plans.

Portland resident and current president of the Portland Historical Society Claire Frisbie addressed her concerns to the applicant and Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) last Thursday. "These houses have an important historic value and offer an opportunity to the developer," she said at the public hearing.

Frisbie also noted that the inclusion of the historic homes would go a long way in developing public goodwill towards the property.

Resident Susan Alyson Young agreed with Frisbie. "Once it's gone, it's gone forever," she said. "These homes have a historical essence that can't be duplicated."

Christine Sullivan, also a member of the historical society said that the historical buildings in question are in "very good shape," and "not in a condition that should be demolished." She asked why the plans call for their removal when, a year ago, the intention of the developer was to keep the houses.

Matthews responded to that question by saying that the developing team initially had hopes to move the houses, though this was a very expensive option. "This is an extremely expensive project and, at some point, costs are going to prevent development," he said. "Then there will be nothing."

Matthews added that keeping the historic houses are something that can be revisited by the developer.

Young also questioned whether the additional residential space would lead to a spike in children and associated education costs. She estimated that if each of the 82 units had one child that it would cost the town an additional

\$943,000 to educate those students based on the current per-pupil expenditures in town.

PZC member Bruce Tyler reported that studies have shown that one child per unit wouldn't happen in a development like the one proposed. "Your logic doesn't come into play with 2 bedroom places, more with 3 and 4 bedroom units," he said.

PZC Chair Don Bascom, meanwhile, wondered whether the development would max out the state sewer system once the two are connected. Adam Thompson, one of the engineers for the project, said the development will be subject to review by the state to ensure that that doesn't happen. "The state will review what we're proposing so we don't ruin it for someone else," he said.

There were other questions regarding the amount of green on the property. Zoning regulations require that mixed-use developments, like the one proposed, maintain 20 percent green space. Pat Gorman, principal for the project, said that while the developer was aiming for maximum build-out there was clear awareness for the green space. "The green space will probably get a little bit bigger," he said. "We're still within the regulations of the town."

The majority of residents who spoke, though, were in favor of the project. "It's a win-win situation," Aldo Pantan said. "We need attractions in town and this looks to be something that a mix of the young and old in town can enjoy."

Fred Knous, chairman of the town's Economic Development Committee (but speaking for himself), said he commended the applicant and PZC "for the unique and attractive proposal put forth tonight."

Knous added, "Without a balance of commercial properties, the burden on taxpayers is going to be greater and greater and greater. This development is crucial to lowering the property tax burden to residents."

Resident Buddy Hernandez also said he was in favor of the project. "We need development in Portland and I encourage future development," he said. "This is a great opportunity that provides affordable rent, encourages walking, and seems to suit the needs of Portland."

Even Young, despite her concerns regarding the historic homes, said, "I never thought I would say this, but this is a benefit to Portland." She said she was a former Glastonbury resident and, while there, protested the arrival of a Home Depot in that town. But, she said she felt this project filled a need in Portland.

Little clarification was given as to what type of businesses can be expected at Portland Town Place. Walgreens was the only name specifically mentioned at Thursday's public hearing though there are plans for a bank, a restaurant and a grocery store.

The largest building residential building, the six-story 51-unit apartment building, is scheduled to be phased into the project. Gorman estimates that the construction of this piece would begin three years into the project.

PZC members continued the public hearing until Thursday, June 4, at 7 p.m., also at Brownstone Intermediate School, located at 314 Main St. In the meantime, commission members are looking to schedule a site visit to the property to better envision what the development would look like for the Town of Portland.

Colchester Budget Passes by Wide Margin

by Adam Benson

Colchester voters Tuesday brought an end to one of the most emotionally charged budget cycles in the town's history by signing off on a \$48.17 million spending plan for next year by a more than 2-to-1 margin.

Residents also widely approved a proposal to completely overhaul the Bacon Academy track and purchases of a new ambulance and fire truck, which officials said were desperately needed to help bolster emergency response capabilities.

A total of 2,113 people cast ballots at Tuesday's election – about a 21 percent turnout, Town Clerk Nancy Bray said.

Taken as a whole, school district and municipal leaders were thrilled with the outcome, and the results came about largely on the strength of information campaigns launched by two entities, officials said.

"A lot of work went into informing people, and that helped people to make a decision," First Selectman Linda Hodge said.

The town's \$13.38 million budget (1,459 'yes,' 666 'no') marked just a 1.39 percent uptick over the current year and includes a .64 mill rate increase, which translates to a 2.78 percent tax hike.

The outcome also marked the first time in three years voters approved a budget with anything more than a zero percent change to the mill rate.

Hodge said the plan was crafted to hold down costs as much as possible as Colchester fights off effects of the economic recession.

"This isn't a budget that is going to move a whole lot of things forward," she said. "It's one that was designed for our economic times."

Still, impacts will be felt. Cuts have already been made to the town's fleet and maintenance funds and two part-time clerks have already been let go in the planning and zoning and social services departments. (Hodge has said she wants to rehire the two in July.)

Since January, the town has been on a strict spending freeze and in April, the Board of Selectmen voted to increase user fees charged by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the health department and others.

"I don't want people to think it's business as usual because while we didn't cut a specific service, we cut within services," Hodge said. "I don't want people to think this budget is going to enlarge things."

On the school side, residents adopted the Board of Education's proposed \$34.82 million budget easily (1,440 'yes,' 683 'no').

The plan's overwhelming margin of victory coaxed a deep sigh of relief from Board of Education Chairman William Hettrick.

Included in that plan is the district's first round of layoffs in 17 years and spending freezes on new technology and materials for school libraries.

But officials were able to avoid any cuts to classroom programming, after school sports and activities after the district's six labor unions agreed in April to take two furlough days – saving \$225,000 next year.

It was an unprecedented move that Hettrick said has been the talk of school boards across the state, but he also credited the agreement as a key reason why the budget sailed through the referendum so easily.

He also said Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle played a key role in mediating negotiations between the sides that brought the concessions to reality.

"The process really dictated that the community should support the budget. We did ev-

erything possible to reduce costs," Hettrick said. "I felt it was definitely going to pass, but not with that wide a margin of yes votes."

Over the course of both the town and school district's budget talks, hundreds of residents turned out to either lend support or speak out against certain proposals included in the plans.

Officials from both sides said the amount of information made available to taxpayers ahead of Tuesday's vote contributed to the victories.

Hettrick said each year, the district plans for a town wide bloc of between 1,200 and 1,600 no votes.

"There are a lot of no votes that turned out to yeses or didn't come out and vote because they were comfortable with the budget," Hettrick said. "Even in this bad economy and with a .64 mill increase, that really speaks to the type of community that we have."

Hodge agreed. "I think some of it was support for the decision-making process. We've spent a lot of time in the community talking to people and explaining the budget," she said. "I think the town spoke very clearly."

Colchester Bond Projects Passed at Referendum

by Adam Benson

Despite a tough economic climate and near-record low annual increases to both town operations and school district spending, Colchester officials said a \$2.3 million bonding package was vital to maintaining Colchester's emergency response capabilities, road quality and recreational assets.

Voters agreed, widely approving the purchase of a new ambulance and fire truck along with monies for road improvements and a reconstruction of the Bacon Academy track.

Throughout the budget process, the track emerged as the highest profile issue – and the one some felt would be most likely to fail. But residents stood behind the facility, moving it through referendum (1,234 'yes,' 884 'no') and onto the design phase.

"It says something about the culture in our community. Obviously, the community understands that we needed the fire truck, we needed the ambulance but they wanted to do the track for the students," Board of Education Chairman William Hettrick said. "These are services to our town, and the community understood that."

The vote will allow town leaders to spend \$665,000 to surface the track, bringing it up to safety standards and providing the community with a significant long-term economic benefit, Parks and Recreation Director Jason Cohen said.

"It's a well-used facility by the community, and I'm hoping this process is going to make the public even more aware that it's an open resource," he said.

Every year, between 70 and 80 athletes on the Bacon Academy Track and Field team use the surface, along with nearly 95 middle school athletes, 25 Special Olympics track and field competitors and 250 physical education students.

Officials estimate a total of about 1,000 community members use the track on an annual basis. Before 2005, the track was patched annually by Colchester's Parks and Recreation department staff with major repairs contracted out every five years.

Over the winter of 2005, the boards of education, finance and selectmen met to discuss the track's long-term viability, and spent nearly \$18,000 more on repairs through 2008.

Laying down a new surface will give the track a 20-year life span and a new moisture-resistant barrier.

Hettrick credited a targeted campaign by athletics boosters, student-athletes and Bacon Academy alums with helping to get the measure through voters.

"The track parents organized and got a lot of information out there," he said. "There's way

more people in the community that use the track than the students and athletes."

Cohen said that, with financing approved, the next step is to hire an architect to design formal construction plans before putting the project out to bid.

One thing that won't change – at least for now – is expanding the track from six lanes to eight, making it suitable for regional athletic competition.

"The Board of Ed and town really struggled with whether or not to even go to the public and ask for the track," Cohen said. "We want to have something that's safe, but they didn't want to go for the Cadillac."

Also on tap is the purchase of a new \$280,000 Type 1 ambulance (1,375 'yes,' 741 'no') and a \$760,000 fire engine tank (1,260 'yes,' 860 'no').

The town's current ambulance has been on the road since 2000 and travels an average of 17 miles to one of nine regional medical facilities each time it responds to a call.

Firefighters say the new truck would have a 20-year life span to replace the 1982 American LaFrance fire attack engine currently in use by the department. The engine – which serves as the primary fire protection engine in the Westchester area – also serves as a water sup-

ply apparatus for the community.

During its 27-year run with the current truck, the CHVFD has seen a 107 percent increase in fire, rescue and hazardous material responses.

The current model has no onboard fire fighting foam system, a water tank capacity of 1,000 gallons and a pump capacity of 1,250 gallons per minute. The truck's open cab design also exposes firefighters to the elements during responses, fire officials have said.

Finally, residents approved \$560,000 in road improvements across town (1,400 yes, 723 no). The repairs would allow for the reconstruction of Chestnut Hill, Linwood Cemetery, Clark Lane and the lower intersection of Gill and Wall streets. They would also provide structural enhancements along Sashel Lane, Jurach Road and the first 1,200 feet of Christy Lane as well as pay for the construction of a drainage outfall and slope work for Marvin Road.

First Selectman Linda Hodge said she was grateful residents sided with the requests of officials on all four projects, especially as many of them are facing tighter budgets at home.

"What excites me about the bond issues is the amount of community involvement in getting the information out," she said. "Frankly, I was surprised that all four passed with the margins they did."

Students Arrested at RHAM High School

by Sarah McCoy

Two separate incidents within the last 10 days led to three student arrests at RHAM High School.

On May 7, two 14-year-old juveniles were arrested and charged with breach of peace after the students were found to have a knife on school grounds, according to state police. School officials were able to retrieve the knife while the students were placed under arrest, according to police reports.

Earlier this week, on May 11, a 17-year-old student was found to be in possession of marijuana with an intent to sell it to other students, police said. According to police, an internal investigation led to the discovery of the drug and the student involved. The student was subsequently arrested and charged with unauthorized sale of drugs within 1,500 feet of a school and possession of less than 4 ounces of marijuana, police said.

Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski said that he couldn't talk about either matter, due to ongoing investigations.

Siminski did say that, generally speaking, school officials become aware of prohibited items on school grounds through a number of means, including other students coming for-

ward, a member of the school staff observing something or parents calling and asking school staff to look into a matter.

According to the policies set forth by the Board of Education, the students involved in the incidents may be expelled. When a student is found to be in possession of either a deadly weapon or engaged in the sale of a controlled substance the principal must recommend expulsion proceedings.

From there, the superintendent will conduct an inquiry concerning the expulsion recommendation. If the superintendent determines that the student should or must be expelled, the recommendation is put forth to the Board of Education for action.

In keeping with the Connecticut General Statutes and the Gun-Free Schools Act, the Board of Education has adopted a policy to expel a student for one full calendar year for specific offenses such as possession of a deadly weapon, the sale of a controlled substance, or possession of a firearm on or off-school grounds.

However, the Board of Education reserves the right to modify the term of the expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

More Troubles for Colchester Police Commission

by Adam Benson

The Colchester Police Commission is without a quorum after veteran member and eight-year chairman William Otfinoski resigned last week.

"Until recently, I enjoyed its many challenges and I am proud of our accomplishments," Otfinoski wrote First Selectman Linda Hodge. "I was happy to be a member of a police commission that provided steady vision, consistent management and represented the people of Colchester."

His resignation is effective immediately, and he gave no indication as the reason behind his decision.

Otfinoski was unavailable for comment for this story.

Otfinoski's departure marks the third time a commissioner has left or been removed from the body since March.

Arthur Standish stepped down in April and former member Jim Stavola was removed by the Board of Selectmen in late March after he publicly released a statement purportedly on behalf of his colleagues expressing disappointment that Otfinoski was cleared of any wrongdoing following an Ethics Commission probe.

Stavola has said repeatedly his banishment was politically motivated because he was a close ally of the police department's union, which has often been at odds with Otfinoski

and Hodge.

However, at its last formal meeting, the Police Commission interviewed 11 possible candidates and forwarded six for the vacancies.

Hodge said the Board of Selectmen will speak with the prospective members May 21 and expects to have the seats filled by early June.

But until the commission is able to get back on track, its responsibilities will be handled by the Board of Selectmen.

The Police Commission – which oversees the general management and supervision of the town's officers – is comprised of five members who serve three-year terms and are appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

Hodge said she's hopeful that with new leadership in place, the past turmoil will be put to rest and the body can move on.

"I fully believe that once we put our new commission in place that we'll be able to move forward and continue to make the gains that have been made in the past," she said.

Hodge said she spoke with Otfinoski in the days leading up to his decision.

"He's put in 10 long years and after we chatted, he thought it was better to step down and this was a good time," she said. "Bill's primary concern is what's in the best interest of the town."

Obituaries

Hebron

Helen Molly Anderson

Helen Molly Anderson, 96, of Hebron and formerly of Newington, passed away peacefully on Friday evening, Feb. 27, at the Harrington Court Genesis Care Center in Colchester. Born April 28, 1912 in Bristol, she was the daughter of the late Albert and Emily (Rinas) Jabs.



Helen married George Arnold Anderson on April 17, 1932. Mr. Anderson predeceased her on March 17, 1989, after 57 years of marriage. Helen was a member of the Christ Lutheran Church in Hebron. Most importantly, she will be remembered by her friends and family as being a loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

Survivors include three children and their spouses, Susan Anderson and her husband, Mark Allaben of Amston, Cynthia and Erwin Pryde of Cheshire and Robert Anderson and his wife, Shirley Ernst of Willington; two brothers, Henry Fred Jabs of Vernon and Walter Jabs of Lincoln, MA; seven grandchildren, Karen Glennon, Vickie Anderson, Laurie Northrop, Kendra Wickers, Gretchen Buys, Deborah Kauffman and Curtis Pryde; and 11 great-grandchildren.

Helen's predeceased siblings include Ed Schultz of New Britain, Margaret Saunders of New Jersey and Gertrude Davey of Plainville.

Helen was a homemaker extraordinaire with expertise in cooking, canning, and sewing. She loved to entertain and kept family and friends in touch with her letters. Helen and her husband traveled to all 50 states, Canada, and Mexico by camper. They spent 30 winters in Florida. Helen was active in her church and loved to square dance.

Gathering begins at 1 p.m. Sunday, May 17, at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, 87 Franklin Sq., New Britain. A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Burial will follow in the Fairview Cemetery, New Britain. Refreshments will be served after burial. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Hospice of Eastern CT, 34 Ledgebrook Dr., Mansfield Center 06250-0716 or to the Christ Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 62, Hebron 06248.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Wesley J. Pierini

Former Portland First Selectman Wesley J. Pierini, 78, of Foley Road, Portland, husband of Jean Colacci Pierini, died peacefully surrounded by his family on Friday, May 8, at Middlesex Hospital following a short illness. Born in Pawtucket, RI, June 25, 1930, a son of the late Louis and Ruth Osfield Pierini, he was a long-time Portland resident.

He was employed as a fuel cell tester for Pratt and Whitney Aircraft Co. until his retirement and was a veteran of the Korean War having served in the U.S. Navy. He was a member of the Portland Democratic Town Committee and had served on the Board of Finance. He also served as Portland First Selectman from 1988 to 1993. He was a coach for the Portland Dukes Football Team and also had coached in the Portland Little League. He was a parishioner of the Church of Saint Mary and was a member of the Knights of Columbus, Freestone Council No. 7.

Besides his wife Jean, he is survived by his daughters and son-in-law, Carol and James Andrew of Middletown, and Ellen Pierini of Portland; his sons and daughters-in-law Wesley and Donna N. Pierini of Middletown, Kevin Pierini of Portland, Mark and Darlene Pierini of Middletown, and James and Donna T. Pierini of Newington; 12 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

He was predeceased by his sister Ruth Allen and his brothers, Louis Pierini, Jr., and Kenneth Pierini.

His family received relatives and friends in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, Sunday, May 10. Funeral services were held Monday, May 11, from the Portland Memorial Funeral Home and later that morning at the Church of Saint Mary for a Mass of Christian Burial. Interment, with military honors, was private in St. Mary's cemetery.

For directions or to leave an online expression of sympathy, visit www.portlandmemorialfh.net.

Colchester

Lorraine A. Dawson

Lorraine A. (Brown) Dawson, 74, of Colchester, died Thursday, April 30, at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown of heart failure, while battling lung cancer and pneumonia. Born in Malvern, PA, she was the daughter of Norman (Dinger) Brown and Dorothy Ewing Brown of Malvern, Pa.

During her life Lorraine had worked at Nachman's Spring Factory, B & B Mushroom Co. She had also been a bartender for the Cottage Tavern and the F. O. E., both of West Chester, PA. Her last places of employment had been the Gulf Station at Five Points Rd., and the Wawa on Market Street, also in West Chester, PA. Lorraine enjoyed camping in the mountains, doing jigsaw puzzles, puzzle books and reading Westerns. She had also been a member of various women's auxiliaries in the West Chester area.

Lorraine is survived by her brother Clifford Brown and his wife Frances, of Malvern, PA; her daughter, Theresa M. Chasse her husband Victor and their three children Michael, Jessica and Nichole, of Colchester, where she had been residing at the time of her death; her son Patrick S. Moriarty and his wife Christine of West Chester, PA; along with several nieces, nephews and a host of friends.

In addition to her parents she is predeceased by her brother, Donald Brown of Indianapolis, IN; her sister, Joan Scott of Downingtown, PA; her sons, Stephen A. Brown and Robert W. Moriarty, both of West Chester, PA.

A memorial service will be held this summer at a place and time in Pennsylvania as yet to be determined by the family.

Portland

Clara Emma Drinkwater

Clara Emma (Hamm) Drinkwater, 85, formerly of Portland, passed away peacefully with her family and friends by her side Thursday, May 7, where she lived in Boynton Beach, FL.

She was born in Hartford and worked at Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford prior to her marriage to her late husband Erroll. They raised their family in Glastonbury and Portland, where they retired. She was a member since 1967 of the Ladies Auxiliary VFW in Glastonbury.

She is also preceded in death by her son, Bruce and daughter-in-law, Judy of Barbourville, VA, and siblings, Chester Hamm of North Haven, David Hamm of Maine, Margaret Muncey of Delaware and Bertha King of East Hartford.

She is survived by her daughter, Kathleen Warzecha and fiancée, Arthur Hetrick of Boynton, FL; son and daughter-in-law, Lawrence and Susan Drinkwater of Cromwell; grandchildren, Scott and wife Cheryl Drinkwater of Cromwell, Traci and husband Nils Anderson of Boynton Beach, FL; Robin and husband Michael Dixon of Scottsville, VA and Chaz Drinkwater of Cromwell; great-grandchildren, Elizabeth Dixon, Kylie Anderson and Matthew Dixon, and also several nieces and nephews.

Memorial services will be held at a later date in the Glastonbury Veterans Cemetery in East Glastonbury. Arrangements entrusted to Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home, Boynton Beach, FL.

Marlborough

Sara Miller

Sara Miller, of Marlborough, formerly from Lakewood, NJ, passed away peacefully in her sleep early Friday morning, May 8.

The matriarch of her family, she lived a wonderful 90 years. Above all else, Sara was dedicated to her family, bringing a richness of love, compassion, caring, and understanding to all.

Predeceased by her son Harry, sister Edith, brother Morris and nephew Bruce, she is survived by her husband of 63 years, David; son Bert and his wife Frima; grandson Scott and his wife Chrissy; great grandchildren, Max and Stephanie, all of Marlborough, granddaughters, Laura (Chicago), Erin (Boulder, CO), Emily Schnell (Memphis, TN); sister Rosalind Gabrielsen (Bayshore, NY), plus nieces and nephews in New York, Florida, Israel and New Jersey.

Interment was Sunday, May 10, at the Floral Park Cemetery in Dean, NJ. Arrangements entrusted to Weinstein Mortuary, Hartford.

For more information, directions, or to sign the guest book, visit online at www.weinsteinmortuary.com.

Colchester

Allen C. Badger

Allen C. Badger, 91, of Colchester, passed away Tuesday, May 5. He was born on Jan. 1, 1918, in Rockland, MA, and was the son of the late Floyd and Addie Sweet Badger. Allen was a veteran of World War II, serving as a sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Force.

He is survived by his four daughters, Pamela Kelly of Colchester, Melanie Holbrook of Rockland, MA, Mary Blake of Pembroke, MA, and Judith Beasley of Oklahoma City, OK, as well as six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Visitation was Saturday, May 9, before the service at the Belmont Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester, followed by full Military Honors. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Masonicare Eastern Hospice.

Andover

Harold M. Neumuth

Harold Martin Neumuth, 98, of Glastonbury, died peacefully Saturday, May 9, at Glastonbury Health Care Center, surrounded by family. He was born Aug. 11, 1910 in Jamaica, NY.

Harold is survived by his wife of 71 years, Eleanor (Lominska) Neumuth; son John and Jan (Mueller) Neumuth of Andover, CT; and daughter Mary Neumuth Mito and Morio Mito of Santa Fe, NM.

Harold was a wonderful "Pop Pop" to four loving grandchildren and eight great grandchildren, Elizabeth Ann Neumuth Raimondo and husband Robert and Jacob and Megan of Hebron, CT, Rebecca Lee Neumuth of Manchester, CT, Jon Martin Neumuth and wife Jessica and Jack, Will, and Mary Kate of Mansfield, CT, Mark Douglas Neumuth and wife Tracey and Sydney, Grace and six-month-old Jude of Marlborough, CT. Harold also leaves nieces, nephews, friends, and caregivers who will miss his great smile.

Harold graduated from Northport High School, Long Island and then moved to Saugerties, NY where he worked at Smith's. He met his future wife, Eleanor, whom he married on Christmas Day, 1937.

Harold was predeceased by his parents Martin John and Catherine (Decker) Neumuth of Pleasant Valley, NY; sisters Edna Richter of East Northport, NY and Florence Kuhlke of Maniola, NY; and brother Raymond Neumuth of Wantagh, NY; and also his beloved dog, Eva.

Harold was employed by the Plant Engineering Dept. of Pratt & Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford for over 31 years, and was a foreman of Dept. 23 where he had many friends and associates. He was a 60-year member of the Masons, Daskam Columbia Lodge #25 in South Glastonbury.

Harold enjoyed trains, both model and passenger, classical music, working on his home, shopping, his grandchildren and the Red Sox.

Funeral service will be held Monday, May 18 at 10 a.m. in the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, with burial immediately following in Green Cemetery in Glastonbury. There are no calling hours. Memorial donations may be made to the Glastonbury Volunteer Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 453, Glastonbury, CT. 06033.

Colchester

John A. Turkington

John A. Turkington, 56, of Colchester, formerly of Manchester, passed away unexpectedly Monday, May 11, at his home. John was born in Manchester July 2, 1952, son of Patricia (Boucher) Turkington of Hebron and the late Alan E. Turkington and had lived in Manchester for most of his life.

While in Manchester he was employed at Allied Printing Services Inc. He also resided in Sandisfield, MA for several years, before recently moving to Colchester. Prior to his ill health, he was employed as a printer at Pond-Eckberg Company, Chicopee, MA for more than 20 years. He enjoyed working on old vintage cars, riding his Harley, was an avid fisherman and also enjoyed watching sporting events.

In addition to his mother, John is survived by two daughters, Jessica Turkington and Alicia Turkington, both of Sandisfield, MA; four brothers, Stephen Turkington of Manchester, David Turkington of Windsor Locks, Michael Turkington and his wife, Cathy of Manchester, James Turkington of Moodus; two nephews, Chris and Matthew and aunts, uncles and cousins.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, May 16, at 2 p.m. at Holmes Funeral Home, 400 Main St., Manchester. Family and friends may call Saturday, May 16, prior to the service from 1-2 p.m. at the funeral home. Burial services will be Saturday, May 23, at a time to be announced in Sandisfield Cemetery, Route 57, Sandisfield, MA.

Memorial contributions in memory of John, may be made to, New England Pain Clinic Hillcrest Campus, Berkshire Medical Center, Development Office, 725 North St., Pittsfield, MA 01201.

Colchester

Allen Januszewski

Allen J. Januszewski, 66, of Colchester and Fort Pierce, FL, passed away April 13 in Florida. He was born Oct. 28, 1942, in the Bronx, NY, son of Frank and Ann Kindel Januszewski. Allen was a U.S. Navy Vietnam veteran attaining the rank of E-3.

Surviving are two sons, James and Eric; a daughter, Kim Molcan; three brothers, Jerome, Daniel and Tyrone; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; several nieces and nephews.

Memorial funeral mass will be held Monday, May 18, at 11 a.m. at St. Andrew's Catholic Church, Norwich Ave., Colchester, followed by a full military service. There are no calling hours.

Belmont Funeral Home of Colchester is in care of arrangements.

Marlborough

Julie Lezon

Julie Lezon, 52, of Marlborough, died Sunday, May 10, while surrounded by family. Julie was born in Hartford to Harold Beard and Patricia Dodge.

She was a devoted and caring mother to Amelia and Jessica as well as a loving wife and best friend to her husband Joe for over 35 years.

Julie was predeceased by her brother, Harold S. Beard.

Besides her sister Susan, Julie leaves behind a brother, sister and father-in-law, nephews, nieces, cousins, relatives and friends, especially best friends since their teens, Rose and Gail.

A memorial services to celebrate her life will be held this Saturday, May 16, at 11 a.m. in Central Baptist Church, 457 Main St., Hartford.

Donations in Julie's memory can be made to the Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center at Hartford Hospital, 85 Retreat Ave., Hartford, CT 06102, or to the charity of your choice.

The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, has care of the arrangements.

Portland Police News

5/6 — Timothy Ransom, 22, of 4 Namonee Ter. East Hampton, was charged with third-degree burglary and third-degree larceny, Portland Police said.

5/7 — Ryan Stocking, 29, of 33 Hubbard St., Haddam, was charged with third-degree burglary and second-degree larceny, police said.